



central newt

Notophthalmus viridescens

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Amphibia
Order: Caudata
Family: Salamandridae

Features

The central newt ranges from 2 1/2 to four inches long. Its body color is olive-green to yellowish- or olive-brown. The belly is yellow. Scattered black specks are present on the back and belly and one or two rows of small, red dots are found along the sides. The eft is a terrestrial stage found in this species and it differs from adults by lacking fins on the tail, having no sexual characteristics, and by having warty skin and a darker color.

Natural History

The central newt lives in woodland ponds and ditches. It has both a terrestrial and an aquatic life stage. Adults tend to be active year round in the water. Adults eat invertebrates, particularly snails, insects, crayfish, and worms. The eft stage eats snails and insects. Each female deposits 200 to 375 eggs in spring. Eggs are attached individually to submerged vegetation and hatch in three to five weeks. Larvae transform in two to three months to the eft stage,

which lives on land and often is found under bark, logs, or rocks. After two or three years, the eft becomes sexually mature, develops fins, and its skin becomes capable of aquatic respiration. At this point, it returns to the water.

Habitats

Mississippi River; bottomland forests; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; interior rivers and streams; temporary water supplies

Iowa Status

threatened, native

Destruction of floodplain forest habitat likely has reduced numbers. Predation from fish introduced into floodplain pools via floods also impact populations.

Iowa Range

southeast Iowa

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.